Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) An isolated fusion protein comprising a stress protein or a portion thereof and a hepatitis B virus (HBV) core antigen, wherein, within the HBV core antigen, at least one and not more than 25 of the amino acid residues are substituted, and the fusion protein, when administered to an individual, induces or enhances an immune response against the HBV core antigen.

2. (Previously presented) The fusion protein in claim 1, wherein the stress protein is a heat shock protein.

3. (Previously presented) The fusion protein of claim 1, wherein the stress protein is selected from the Hsp10, Hsp40, Hsp60, Hsp70, Hsp90, Hsp100-200, Hsp100, Lon, TF55, Hsp40, FKBPs, cyclophilin, Hsp20-30, ClpP, GrpE, ubiquitin, calnexin, or protein disulfide isomerase or small molecular weight family of stress proteins.

4. (Currently amended) The fusion protein of ~~claim 3~~ claim 1, wherein the stress protein is ~~*M. bovis* BCG hsp65~~ a mycobacterial stress protein.

5. (Currently amended) The fusion protein of ~~claim 1, wherein the HBV core antigen comprises a fragment of the HBV core antigen lacking all or part of the C-terminal arginine-rich domain~~ claim 4, wherein the mycobacterial stress protein is an *M. bovis* BCG stress protein.

6. (Currently amended) The fusion protein of claim 5, wherein the ~~HBV core antigen fragment comprises amino acid 1 to 149 or amino acid 1 to 151 of the core antigen of the HBV adw strain~~ *M. bovis* BCG stress protein is an *M. bovis* BCG hsp65 stress protein.

7. (Currently amended) A fusion protein comprising the sequence ~~shown in any one of Figures 6, 8, 10 or 12~~ of SEQ ID NO:6; SEQ ID NO:8; SEQ ID NO:10; or SEQ ID NO:12.

8. (Currently amended) A pharmaceutical composition comprising the fusion protein of any one of claims 1 to 7 or 21-33.

9. (Previously presented) The pharmaceutical composition of claim 8, further comprising a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or excipient.

10. (Currently amended) An isolated nucleic acid comprising a sequence that encodes the fusion protein of any one of claims 1 to 7 or 21-33.

11. (Currently amended) An isolated nucleic acid comprising ~~a sequence shown in any one of Figures 5, 7, 9 or 11~~ the sequence of SEQ ID NO:5; SEQ ID NO:7; SEQ ID NO:9; or SEQ ID NO:11.

12. (Currently amended) An expression vector comprising the nucleic acid of claim 10 ~~or 11~~. .

13. (Currently amended) A retroviral vector comprising the nucleic acid of claim 10 ~~or 11~~.

14. (Previously presented) A cell comprising the expression vector of claim 12.

15. (Currently amended) A method of making a fusion protein ~~according to any one of claims 1 to 7~~, the method comprising:

(a) providing the cell of claim 14, and

(b) culturing the cell under conditions that permit expression of the nucleic acid.

16. (Currently amended) A method of inducing or enhancing an immune response against an HBV core antigen in a subject, the method comprising administering to the subject an effective amount of the fusion protein of any <u>one</u> of claims 1 to 7 <u>or 21-33</u>.

17. (Previously presented) A method of inducing or enhancing an immune response against an HBV core antigen in a subject, the method comprising administering to the subject an effective amount of the pharmaceutical composition of claim 8.

18. (Previously presented) The method of claim 17, wherein the pharmaceutical composition further comprises a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or excipient.

19. (Previously presented) A method of inducing or enhancing an immune response against an HBV core antigen, the method comprising administering to a subject an effective amount of the expression vector of claim 12.

20. (Previously presented) A method of inducing or enhancing an immune response against an HBV core antigen, the method comprising administering to a subject an effective amount of the expression vector of claim 13.

21. (New) The isolated fusion protein of claim 1, wherein, within the HBV core antigen, 1-10 amino acid residues are substituted.

22. (New) The isolated fusion protein of claim 21, wherein, within the HBV core antigen, 1-5 amino acid residues are substituted.

23. (New) The isolated fusion protein of claim 22, wherein, within the HBV core antigen, 1-2 amino acid residues are substituted.

24. (New) The fusion protein of claim 23, wherein at least one of the substitutions generates a mouse MHC-restricted CTL epitope within the HBV core antigen.

25. (New) The fusion protein of claim 24, wherein the HBV core antigen comprises SEQ ID NO:2 and the isoleucine residue at position 97 is substituted.

26. (New) The fusion protein of claim 25, wherein the isoleucine residue is substituted with another amino acid residue that has a nonpolar side chain.

27. (New) The fusion protein of claim 26, wherein the isoleucine residue is substituted with phenylalanine.

28. (New) The fusion protein of claim 24, wherein the HBV core antigen comprises SEQ ID NO:2 and the threonine residue at position 91 is substituted.

29. (New) The fusion protein of claim 28, wherein the threonine residue is substituted with another amino acid residue that has a nonpolar side chain.

30. (New) The fusion protein of claim 29, wherein the threonine residue is substituted with valine.

31. (New) The fusion protein of claim 24, wherein the HBV core antigen comprises SEQ ID NO:2 and the asparagine residue at position 87 is substituted.

32. (New) The fusion protein of claim 31, wherein the asparagine residue is substituted with another amino acid residue that has a nonpolar side chain.

33. (New) The fusion protein of claim 32, wherein the asparagine residue is substituted with valine.

34. (New) An expression vector comprising the nucleic acid of claim 11.

35. (New) A cell comprising the expression vector of claim 34.

36. (New) A retroviral vector comprising the nucleic acid of claim 11.